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Future of U.S. Corrections Tied to Evidence-Based Practices, Predictive Tools, CEO Tells Texas Correctional Association

*Heightened Focus on High-Risk Offenders and Diversion for Lower-Risk Offenders is Potent
Solution for Budget Woes, Recidivism, Assessments CEO says in TCA keynote*

BOUNTIFUL, Utah – As states across the nation struggle with budget deficits without sacrificing critical programs such as public safety and corrections, a new lower cost, higher return approach to criminal justice is a vital component of today's new economic order, Assessments.com CEO Sean Hosman recently told members of the Texas Correctional Association.

Quickly heading the way of extinction are the days of a lock-them-all-up model that began in the mid-1970s as part of a get-tough-on-crime policy response that has neither been effective in curbing crime and the revolving door of recidivism, nor serving tax payers in an economically efficient way, said Hosman, who delivered the keynote speech before more than 350 corrections officials attending the conference held in Galveston, Texas in June. The model of the future will be Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and predictive tools that bring a stronger rehabilitative focus for offender populations to minimize recidivism, along with lower costs and more efficient management of corrections resources.

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Technology factors heavily into the new model as new EBP 4th generation tools are being used by states and county adult and juvenile corrections and probation to effectively manage outcomes. Using validated risk and protective factors linked to automated assessment-driven case planning, these tools offer strong advantages to communities, offenders, agencies and taxpayers. They enable sophisticated triaging of offenders based on risk-to-reoffend characteristics that divert low- and mid-risk offenders to lower cost behavioral treatment and/or limited or no supervision. Treatment for high-risk offenders is targeted to individual needs on a case-by-case basis, allowing offenders to get the effective help they need to re-enter society without reoffending. Cost savings compared to incarceration are dramatic as are results.

“Increasingly, the focus in our corrections system is on re-entry and addressing recidivism,” says Hosman. “Locking up people regardless of the risk they present has proven to be ineffective and enormously cost prohibitive for states. As a nation, we must move toward solutions that offer better returns, and evidence-based assessment tools and needs-driven supervision will be critical in shaping a new course,” he said.

Assessment.com’s newest tool, the STRONG (Static Risk and Offender Needs Guide), was developed with Washington State Department of Corrections and currently is in use there as well as in several California counties. The static risk assessment is a 26-item tool constructed from factors most strongly associated with recidivism and to help probation and corrections staff to make better supervision, placement, discharge and re-entry decisions.

These and other tools, says Hosman, taking the guesswork out of many important corrections decisions, utilizing evidence, research and data about what works and applying it to affect change in individuals and our system overall.

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About Assessments.com

Assessments.com (ADC) is the nation's leading innovator in implementing evidence-based practices (EBP) for the corrections and probation field, providing expertise and the newest generation of validated assessment tools and "smart" technology used today by criminal justice agencies across the country. Through these Web-based tools, agencies are reducing recidivism, rehabilitating juvenile and adult offenders, and saving taxpayer money through improved work processes and increased efficiencies.

ADC is a primary force in addressing many of the critical issues facing our corrections systems related to recidivism, caseloads, overcrowding and costs to taxpayers and communities. Based in Bountiful, Utah, the company was formed in 1998 when it created a public/private partnership with the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Services (WAJCA) and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to change the way the state's justice system worked with juveniles. Today ADC provides validated risk assessment and case management software, staff training and consulting for many of the largest criminal justice agencies in the U.S. to address juvenile and adult offenders.

ADC's on-the-ground experience working with more than 75 criminal justice systems, including many of the largest such as California, Florida, Texas and Washington state, is producing positive outcomes and cost-savings through innovative changes in business rules, more effective assessment and targeted case planning and needs management.

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